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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NINEWA: TURKISH SPECIAL ENVOY ELABORATES ON GOT  
POLICY ON MAKHMOUR CAMP AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH KURDS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 866  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 927  
[1](#)C. BAGHDAD OI 3/29

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Jason Hyland: Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. Turkish Special Envoy Murat Ozcelik told PRT officers, Multi-National Division-North Deputy Commanding General BG Thomas and 3 Armored Cavalry Regiment Commander COL Bills at a March 26 meeting at the Turkish Consulate General in Mosul that ongoing Turkish military opposition was the main reason for his advocating delay in discussions on resolution of the Makhmour refugee camp issue. He also hinted that the Turkish military might not see the camp as much of a threat, preferring to keep it as a political issue. In addition, he outlined a viable commercial basis for strong Turkish ties with Iraqi Kurds, particularly as a counterweight to Iranian influence in the region. Ozcelik lamented the missed opportunity to meet Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani on this trip, but said he plans to return to Iraq soon. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Expanding on his Makhmour camp comments to Ambassador Crocker on March 20 (ref A), Ozcelik said hard-line individuals within the Turkish military oppose the return of the camp's refugees to Turkey. If a prominent public process were pursued now, he said, those same individuals would look for "terrorist" elements within the camp and use their presence as an excuse to scuttle the talks. Ozcelik said a more realistic short-term solution would be absorption of the camp under KRG control, particularly as he said the camp's surrounding district is likely to come formally under Kurdish control through resolution of the Article 140 process. He estimated that the hard-line Turkish military individuals are privately more willing to accept a solution, and would possibly soften their position on final resolution of Makhmour in the long term. He also hinted privately to PRT Leader that the Turkish military might not see the camp as much of a threat, preferring to keep it as an unresolved political issue. He asked rhetorically who considered resolution of the issue so important.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Stressing his own commercial background, Ozcelik said Turkey's national interests lie in supporting Kurdish Iraqi economic and political interests as a means to stabilize Iraq and rebuff Iranian influence in Iraq. He clarified that the GOT wishes to work with all Iraqi ethnic and religious groups at the national level, but projected that Turkey's future natural interests will match the Kurds. "Having Kurdish presence and strength in the central government are important" to Turkey, he said. Ozcelik said several Turkish companies, including Turkish-Kurdish upstream

hydrocarbons companies, are interested in working in the KRG.

He said the GOT would use its leverage over downstream oil delivery through pipelines that transit Turkey as a means to ensure that Turkish companies win preferential treatment in KRG oil contracts. Regarding relations among Iraqi ethnic groups at the provincial level, he made clear in his comments to the Turkish Consul General that the Turkish Consulate's first responsibility should be to the protection of the local Turkmen population.

¶4. (S/NF) Ozcelik said he was disappointed not to have met KRG Prime Minister Barzani on this trip. The GOT envoy said he could not afford to wait any longer in Iraq to meet Barzani, as he faces opposition in Turkey over such a meeting. Alternatively, Ozcelik was enthusiastic about the "substantive" meeting he had with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh. During his visit to Ninewa, Ozcelik met Governor Kashmoula, Iraqi Islamic Party provincial head Mohamed Shaker and members of the provincial government. He returned to Turkey via the KRG province of Dohuk, where he met with the Dohuk governor and KDP International Relations Director (and former long-time KDP Ankara representative) Safeen Dizayee on March 28 (ref c).

¶5. (S/NF) COMMENT. As mentioned in ref B, Ozcelik seems well aware of the divisions within the GOT over the future of Turkish policy on Iraq. His meeting in Mosul with PRT and Coalition Forces seemed well calculated to build the case for joint USG-GOT interests in Iraq, backed by strong Turkish economic and political activity and limited Turkish foreign aid.  
CROCKER